

Solicitations by law enforcement organizations
(SB 427 by Edwards/Oakley)

DIGEST: SB 427 would have amended current law regarding solicitation of funds by law enforcement organizations. Such organizations would have been required to report annually to the Attorney General's Office regarding solicited contributions. The report would have included particulars of the organization and its membership and the percentage of funds collected that was paid to maintain the solicitation operation. Solicitors would have been required to notify persons solicited that this information could be reviewed in the Attorney General's Office.

GOVERNOR'S
REASON
FOR VETO:

This bill would make non-substantive changes to the law relating to solicitations of funds for law enforcement personnel, without improving the law. Furthermore, one section of the bill is subject to misinterpretation, creating the possibility of increased problems for solicitors of funds for law enforcement agencies.

RESPONSE:

Sen. Chet Edwards, the author of SB 427, said, "I am convinced that the governor did not receive adequate information before vetoing this bill. This bill is important in order to stop 'sham' operations that would use the good name of law enforcement organizations to raise money for non-charitable purposes." Sen. Edwards also was quoted as saying the bill would "require full public disclosure so little old ladies on fixed incomes and working-class families that give \$25 to police organizations would know how their dollars are being spent."

The Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas (CLEAT), which supported the bill, asked for an investigation of a December ski trip that had been partially paid for by the Texas State Troopers Association, which opposed the bill, and that included two top aides to Gov. Clements, to determine if the aides were improperly influenced to recommend to the governor that SB 427 be vetoed. Both Gov. Clements and his aides, chief of staff Mike Toomey and legislative liaison Cliff Johnson, denied that the ski trip had any bearing on governor's decision to veto the bill.

NOTES:

SB 427 passed the House on the Consent Calendar and was not analyzed in a Daily Floor Report.